Intelligent Transport System: Past, Present and Future

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Date: April 18, 2018 (Wednesday)
Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
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Abstract
The use of computer technology to deal with traffic congestion in our urban areas was started in 1959 when Toronto, Canada became the first city in the world to experiment the use of a general purpose computer for traffic signal control. Since then, the use of ICT in traffic control has been spreading and in the 1970s, Hong Kong became the first city in Asia to install a computer based area traffic control system. The use of ICT was later introduced to other types of transport systems, including those for expressway management and control, payments for public transport using smart cards, and tolling and road pricing systems. The Octopus Card commonly used in Hong Kong is famous around the world and many sophisticated tunnel and bridge management systems using the latest computer, communications and sensor technologies have been implemented in this area. However, it was not until the 1990s that the acronym ITS was used to reflect the use of ICT technology in making our transport systems more intelligent to deal with the worsening traffic conditions. At the turn of the century, the availability of wifi and internet provided impetus to the development of ITS and later, the invention of the smartphone and the development of connected and autonomous vehicles raise ITS to a new height. As we are being ushered into the Smart City era, smart mobility strategies are being developed in many cities. At the same time, our concern for the environment urges us to consider systems that can help us to switch from automobiles to other modes. Many such systems with improved sustainability and social and political acceptance are being developed.

The presentation traces the development of ITS from its Toronto days, using major projects as illustrations. It then describes a number of recent innovations and speculates on future development in the context of the emerging trend of smart mobility planning in major cities of the world.

About the Speaker
Joe Lam received his engineering degree from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland and has been active in the ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) field for over 40 years. He started his ITS career by spending 11 years with the Toronto, Canada, managing the first computerized signal system in the world. Before becoming an independent consultant in March 2014, he served as the Managing Director of Delcan International Corporation, with his main focus on ITS business development and management of client and partnership relations around the world. During his tenure as Delcan's President of Systems Business, Canada & International Operations, Joe directed a group of traffic, communications and software engineering professionals on numerous innovative and award winning ITS projects, and contributed significantly to the export of Canadian technology to manage traffic congestion problems around the world.

He has authored numerous reports and papers on various aspects of ITS, and regularly speaks on this subject at conferences and lectures in universities around the world. He was the Chairman of ITS Canada between 1998 and 2009, during which he dedicated himself to the development of ITS in Canada. He was also a Director and Vice President of the Transportation Association of Canada between 2001 and 2009. In the Year 2000, he received from the Canadian National Transportation Week an Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Contribution to Transportation in Canada. In 2012, he received an award from ITS Canada as the Distinguished Member of the Year for his past contribution to the ITS industry around the world. His business development and operation efforts in Hong Kong in the past two decades led to Delcan being awarded in early 2014 the Inaugural Hong Kong - Canada Business Performance Award jointly by the Hong Kong Trade and Development Office and the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association.

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